
Joint Urban Warrior 08 (JUW 08) – Quicklook Report

This report provides a short summary of selected key insights from the JUW 08 war game. A comprehensive final report for JUW 08 is forthcoming.

JUW 08 BACKGROUND

JUW is a U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Joint Forces Command co-sponsored war game designed to address and improve joint and combined urban operations concept development and experimentation (CD&E). The most recent iteration, JUW 08, was conducted 7-11 April 2008 at the Bolger Center in Potomac, MD. War game participants included the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Department of State (DOS), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), Joint IED Defeat Organization Counter-IED Operations Integration Center (JIEDDO COIC), students from the U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff Colleges, representatives from 18 partner nations, and members of academia.

OBJECTIVES

JUW 08 explored joint capabilities and coalition and interagency relationships required for an irregular warfare campaign. The war game's problem statement was: *How to employ military capabilities in support of irregular warfare efforts focusing on transition*. Transition is defined by the *Stability, Security, Transition and Reconstruction Operations Joint Operating Concept* (SSTRO JOC) as the "process of shifting lead responsibility and authority for helping provide security, essential services, humanitarian assistance, economic development, and political governance from the intervening military and civilian agencies to the host nation."

GAME CONSTRUCT

JUW 08 examined points along a hypothetical transition scenario in Iraq. The war game moves were built around a fictional task force that was to draw down from a division to a brigade to advisor teams during a specified period. Figure 1 shows a notional and conceptual model of transition with the three game moves roughly overlaid on top. Move 1 examined a MEF/Division sized force; Move 2 a Brigade Combat Team/Regimental Combat Team sized force; and Move 3 focused on replacing forces with advisory teams.

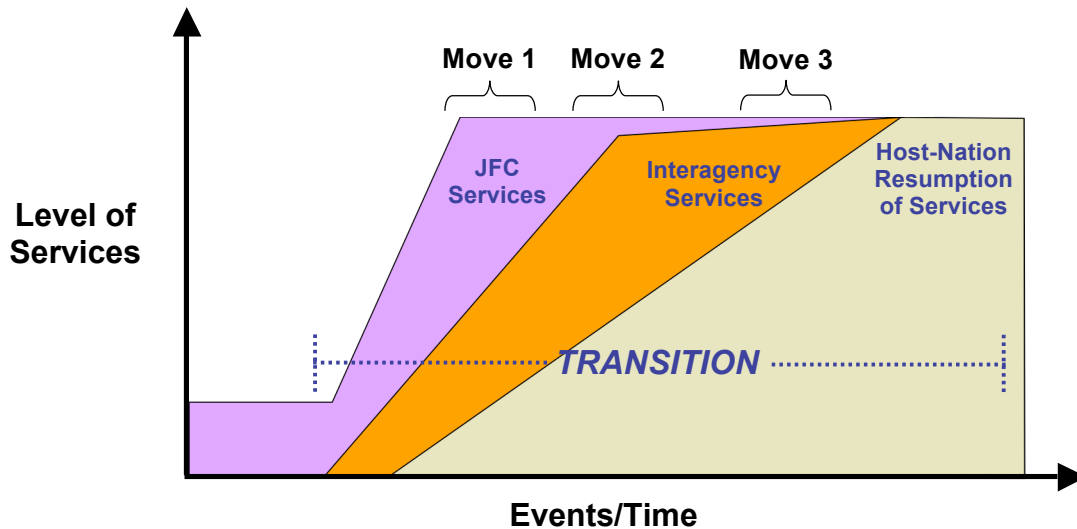


Figure 1. JUW 08 Transition Game Moves.

KEY ISSUES AND INSIGHTS FOR TRANSITION

The key issues and insights for an occupying force in transition that emerged from JUW 08 are summarized by these four points:

Control. The central issue for transition is the transfer of control from coalition functions to legitimate host nation (HN) functions.

Balance. The force must maintain a balanced posture among coalition and HN key components of the mission set and among areas within the area of operations (AO) in order to maintain sustainable growth in HN capabilities.

Agility. The force must maintain sufficient agility for timely and effective reaction to changes in the mission environment.

Risk. The force must manage risk. Accepting sufficient risk is necessary to initiate transition but the force must not accept so much risk that it becomes increasingly susceptible to the loss of control. It must trade-off *force protection risk* against *mission risk*. The relationship between transition and risk is further discussed in the next section.

CONTROL vs. RISK

The key decisions that have to be made during transition all relate to risk. If the force assumes no risk, transition does not happen. If the force accepts too much risk, then it could prematurely lose control and the situation could rapidly deteriorate. The commander must find, through trial

and error, the level of acceptable risk. Transition is transferring control and maintaining acceptable risk levels as the force is reduced.

There are two different types of risks and it is useful to distinguish between the two: *force protection risk* and *mission risk*. Certain actions to decrease one type of risk may exacerbate the other type. Political leaders are more inclined to worry about force protection risk which can have major strategic consequences on the continued participation of a nation in the mission. Military leaders are more concerned with mission risk – about getting the job done. During transition, force protection risk and mission risk will both go up. Balancing, managing, and moderating risk will be crucial tasks for field commanders and senior political and military leadership.

TRANSITION VISUALIZATION

Transition is a complex, non-linear “wicked problem.”¹ No simple model can explain all of its dynamics. JUW 08 participants employed a visualization tool that lays out functions and events over time during transition. In Figure 2, the left-hand column describes the current situation in terms of functions. The right-hand column describes the end-state for the transition of functions to the HN. The transition team should identify which functions can be transitioned, determine when responsibility for those functions should be transitioned, and then depict that migration of responsibility in the graphic. The transition team also identifies the critical events that would drive or impact the potential for success. These are listed along the bottom of the figure as “critical events to war game.” The transition team must also identify corrective action should the critical events threaten an orderly transition. This example transition visualization tool is filled out for the purposes of the JUW 08 Iraq scenario, but the general approach – emphasizing and focusing on functions first, instead of organization or form – could prove helpful to commanders beginning to think about any transition problem.

¹ U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Pamphlet (TRADOC Pam) 525-5-500, *The U.S. Army Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design* - "not wicked in the sense of evil, but rather extremely difficult".

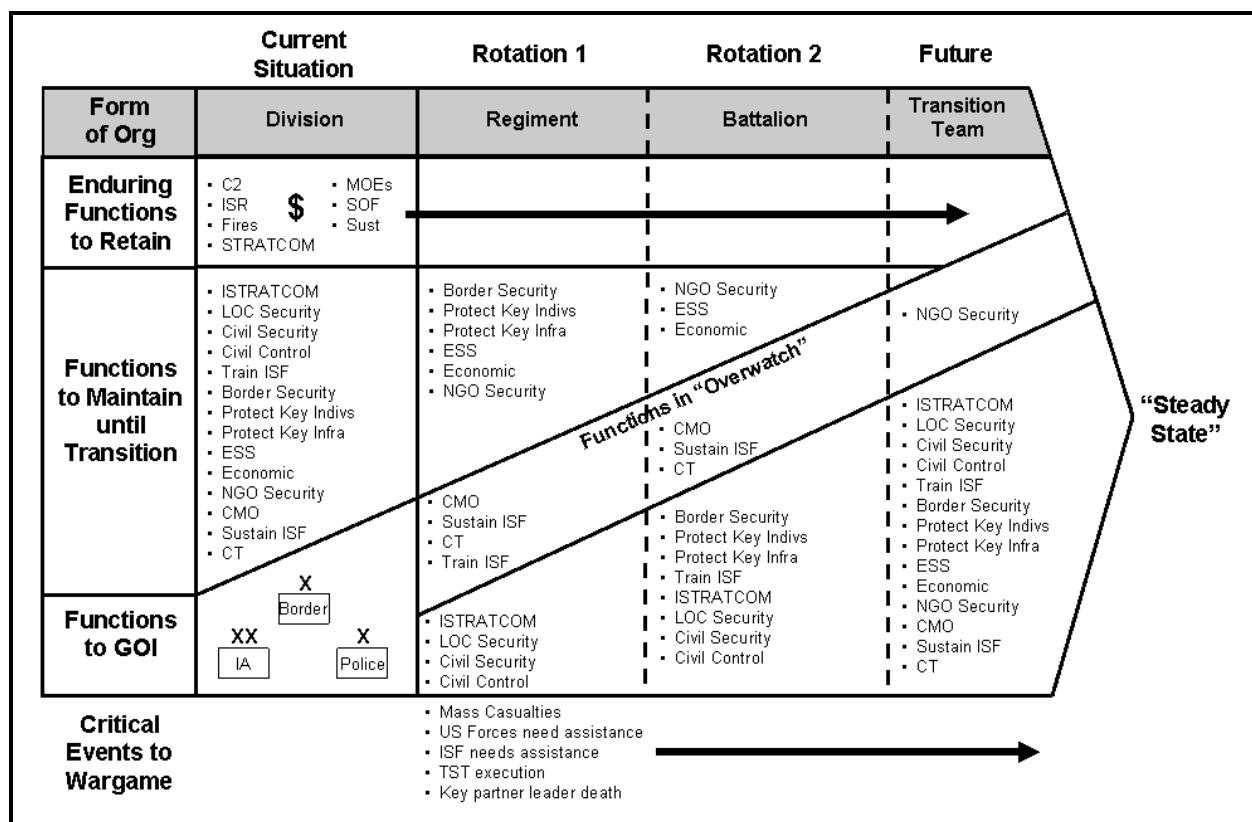


Figure 2. Transition Visualization Tool.

TRANSITION FORCE REDUCTION PHASES

The reduction of forces in transition is not linear and with the many rapid changes in the environment, the middle point of transition is not stable in a counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign. Thus, the validity of tactical overwatch should be further analyzed. We have defined tactical overwatch as small units and individuals assisting those who have newly acquired responsibility for functions of government. Figure 3 addresses the dynamics of transition and the viability of a medium footprint overwatch phase.

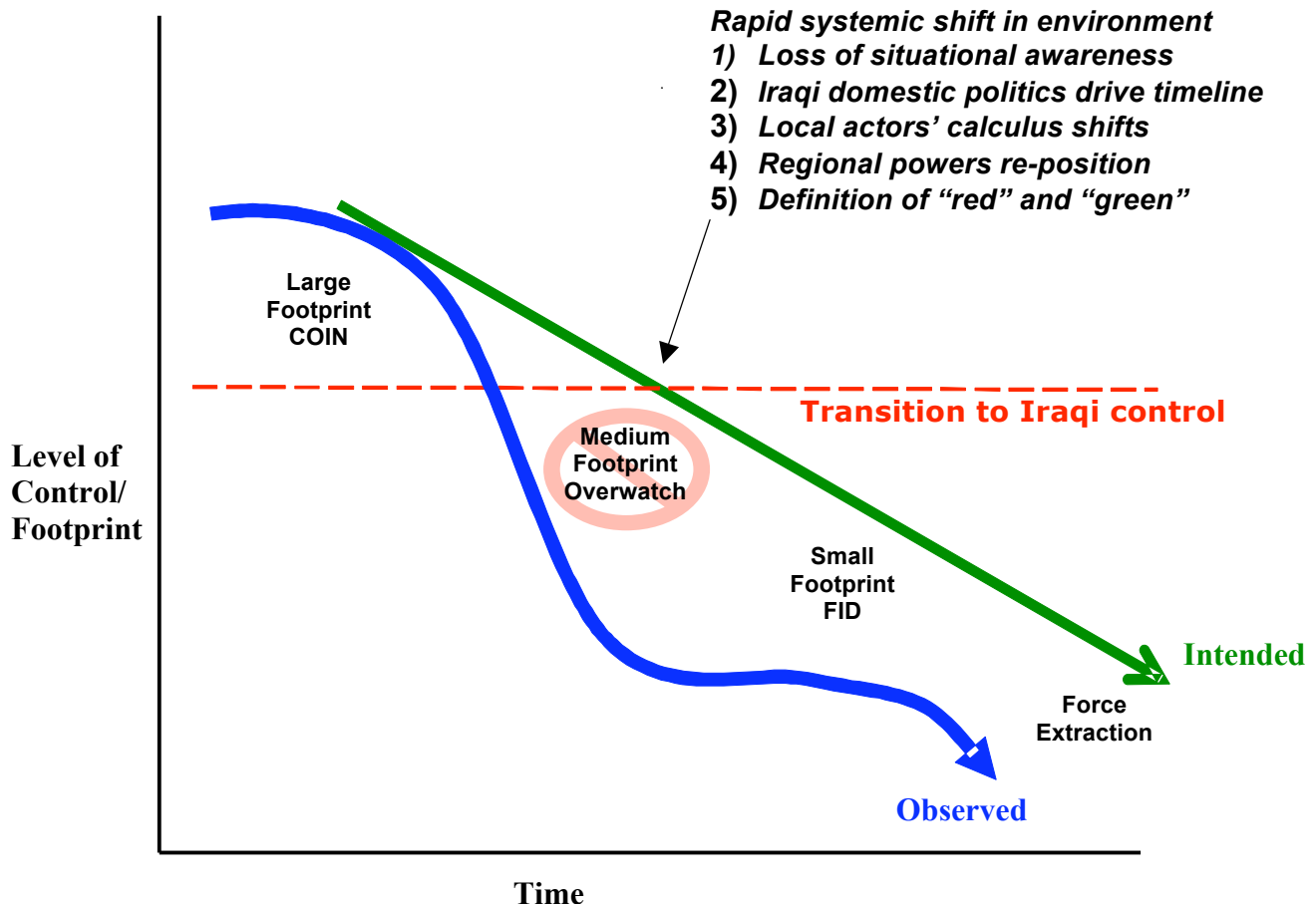


Figure 3. Force Drawdown Inflection Point.

During transition, there are rapid systemic shifts in the environment. Many factors change with some factors reversing completely. Host nation politics begin to drive the transition timeline, instead of coalition politics. The alignment calculus of local groups shifts and these groups realign to best fit the new environment. Similarly, regional powers re-position. As all this changes, the definitions of Red (hostiles) and Green (friendly HN) change, partly because of group realignment, but also because it is now the HN and not the coalition that is defining who are Red and Green. Along with all these changes, the Blue force is losing situational awareness due to loss of capability in the drawdown. This reduced situational awareness cannot keep pace with all the changes to the environment.

As a large COIN force draws down to a medium-sized overwatch force, to a small Foreign Internal Defense (FID) force and then finally to complete force withdrawal, that reduction in force is not constant and linear. That reduction in force will have to be matched to conditions on the ground, as well as meeting any political timelines already set. The problem comes at the middle point of the transition – the tactical overwatch. There will be a medium amount of forces providing overwatch to coalition civilians and HN forces. This is the point where the forces are still large enough to be targets but not large enough and without the latitude and freedom to mitigate risk comfortably. These forces in overwatch will present a major risk management

problem, yet at the same time are only providing a decreasing material contribution to the ongoing mission. There will be pressure to remove the vulnerable forces and draw down quickly to a much smaller FID footprint. Therefore, from both a conceptual and an empirical basis, tactical overwatch during transition may not be viable. The reduction in force will increase rapidly through this middle phase, creating a sudden bend in the curve and a commensurate loss of local control – an inflection point. Identifying, understanding, and transitioning to force extraction dealing with such inflection points along the drawdown will be a major challenge and a point of operational art.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some of the more prominent recommendations included:

- Apply JUW 08 lessons into U.S. Army's I Corps Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRX).
- Box out transition inflection points and war game them in detail.
- Focus on education versus training in preparing forces for transition operations.
- Educate current and future policy makers on the complexity and challenges of transition.
- Tactical overwatch as an approach to transition security appears to be unsound and warrants further examination.
- Develop a regional political/diplomatic engagement strategy ahead of time.
- Develop a global perception management policy to support transition operations.
- Reconvene the Joint Strategic Assessment Team (JSAT) as a Combined JSAT (CJSAT) with Iraqi involvement and include Iraqis as part of that team.

POINT OF CONTACT

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